Decay of Hindu rulers.

There were signs of decay, and the last of the strong Hindu rulers was queen Didda (950–1003). Then followed the Lohara dynasty. Central authority was weakened, the country was a prey to civil war and violence, and the Damaras, skilled in burning, plundering, and fighting, harassed the valley. The last of this line was Jaya Simha, or Simha Deva (1128); and in his reign the Tartar, Khān Dalcha, invaded Kashmīr, and after great slaughter set fire to Srīnagar. He subsequently perished in the passes on his retreat from Kashmīr, overtaken by snow. Rām Chand, the commander-in-chief of the Kashmīr army, had meanwhile kept up some semblance of authority in the valley, and had routed the Gaddis from Kishtwār. With Rām Chand were two soldiers of fortune, Rainchan Shāh from Tibet and Shāh Mirza from Swāt.

Progress of Islām.

Rainchan Shāh quarrelled with Rām Chand, and with the assistance of the Ladākhis attacked and killed him. He married Kuta Rānī, the daughter of Rām Chand, and embracing Islām became the first Muhammadan king of Kashmīr, but died after a short reign of two and a half years. At this juncture Udayanadeva appeared, who was the brother of Rājā Simha Deva and had fled to Kishtwār. He married the widow, Kuta Rānī, and reigned for fifteen years. On his death Kuta Rānī assumed power for a short time, and committed suicide rather than marry Shāh Mirza, who now declared himself king. He was the first of the line known as Salātīn-i-Kashmīr, and took the name of Shams-ud-dīn. In 1394 Sultān Sikandar, known for his fierce zeal as *butshikan* or 'Iconoclast,' was king of Kashmīr. He was a gloomy fanatic, and destroyed nearly all the grand buildings and temples of his Hindu predecessors. To the people he offered death, conversion, or exile. Many fled; many were converted to Islām; many were killed, and it is said that Sikandar burnt seven maunds of sacred threads worn by the murdered Brāhmans. By the end of his reign all Hindu inhabitants of the valley, except the Brāhmans, had probably adopted Islām.

Muhammadan rulers.

In 1420 Zain-ul-ābidīn succeeded. He was wise, virtuous, and frugal, and very tolerant to the Brāhmans. He remitted the poll-tax on Hindus, encouraged the Brāhmans to learn Persian, repaired some of the Hindu temples, and revived Hindu learning. Hitherto in Kashmīr Sanskrit had been written in Sarada, an older sister of the Devanāgari character. The introduction of Persian, as the official language, divided the Brāhmans into three subdivisions: the Kārkuns, who

3: Imperial Gazetteer G-3 (1889-95) 1909 AV1 Kashmir AV1

entered official life; the Bāchabatts, who discharged the function of the priesthood; and the Pandits, who devoted themselves to Sanskrit learning. Towards the end of this good and useful reign the Chakks sprang into mischievous prominence. Zain-ul-ābidīn drove them out of the valley, but in the time of his weak successors they returned and eventually seized the government of Kashmīr. Turbulent and brave, the Chakks were not fitted for administration. Yākūb Khān, the last of the line, offered a stubborn resistance to Akbar, and with the help of the Bambās and Khakhās routed the Mughal on his first attempt on the valley (1582). But later, not without difficulty and some reverses, Kashmīr was finally conquered (1586).[1]

The Mughals.

Akbar visited the valley three times. He built a strong fort on the slopes of the Hara Parbat, paying high wages, and dispensing with forced labour. His revenue minister, Todar Mal, made a very summary record of the fiscal conditions of the valley. Jahāngīr was greatly attached to Kashmīr. He laid out lovely pleasure-gardens; around the Dal Lake were 777 gardens, yielding a revenue of 1 lakh from roses and bed musk. Much depended on the character of the governors. Alī Mardān Khān, the best of these, built a splendid series of *sarais* on the Pīr Panjāl route to India, and grappled with a famine with energy and success. Aurangzeb visited the valley only once; but in that brief time he showed his zeal against the unbelievers, and his name is still execrated by the Brāhmans. Then followed the disorder of decay, and in 1751 the *Sūbah* of Kashmīr was practically independent of Delhi.

The Durrānis and Sikhs.

From the following year the unfortunate Kashmīris experienced the cruel oppression of Afghān rule, the short but evil period of the Durrāni. Governors from Kābul plundered and tortured the people indiscriminately, but reserved their worst cruelties for the Brāhmans, the Shiahs, and the Bambās of the Jhelum valley. In their agony the people of Kashmīr turned with hope to the rising power of Ranjīt Singh of Lahore. In 1814 a Sikh army advanced by the Pīr Panjāl, Ranjīt Singh watching the operations from Pūnch. This expedition miscarried; but in 1819 Misr Dīwān Chand, Ranjīt Singh's great general, accompanied by Gulāb Singh of Jammu, overcame Muhammad Azīm Khān, and entered Shupiyan. In comparison with the

[1] Kashmīr had been attacked from the side of Ladākh by Mirzā Haidar (the author of the *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī*) in 1532, and again invaded from the south in 1540, and ruled by him (nominally on behalf of the emperor Humāyūn) until his death eleven years later.

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arrived I found one man carrying it, a large solid leather kit bag, and his own rations. The weight was at the least a hundred and fifty pounds. I was extremely angry, and made it very unpleasant all round, as plenty of coolies had been arranged for. Nothing of the sort ever occurred again, but my orderlies told me, and I saw enough to show that the report was true, that the sepoys treated the coolies like dogs, and beat them as they would a beast of burden. The fact is, the Kashmiri villager proper, to which class our carriers belonged, comes of a race that has been mercilessly oppressed for centuries by foreign Mahomedan rulers from India. Being a Mahomedan, he has been specially ill-used since Kashmir passed under Hindu rule. The sepoys and officials of all classes are almost to a man Dogras and other Hindus who have absolutely no sympathy with the Kashmiri. The race is physically fine, great, strong men and well fed, but morally they are, what their oppression has made them, liars and pitiful cowards, who cringe to the stick of the sepoy like spaniels. My coolies said they were never paid when employed on Government work, and that they generally had to supply their own rations. They certainly expected no pay on this occasion, and were delighted and astonished beyond measure when I saw them paid myself. The Durbar made nothing by the transaction when coolies were impressed, it was duly charged for their hire, but the money stuck in the hands of those drawing it. A new era has now opened, owing to the revenue settlement carried out by my friend, Mr Walter Lawrence, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, whose services